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THE LIMITS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN REFORMS.

BY T. RUSSELL SULLIVAN.

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LIMITS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN REFORMS.

THE 22d of February, 1861, has passed. The star-spangled banner again gave sign that the Power that made us a nation has graciously kept us so. Will it be thus on the next anniversary of the day? Are our eyes and our children's destined to see that standard-sheet rent in twain, or star after star blotted from its azure field? Will the seceding States at the extreme South return? or will one after another be drawn after them? The future is known only to God. We know not what a day may bring forth; but we will not despair as long as a national welcome shall be given to the birthday of Washington, and the national flag still floats over the capital called by his name. Even now, the gloom is somewhat relieved, and the signs brighten. The last reports from the Peace Conference are favorable.

It is said that the greatest service that the country could receive would be a thorough treatise on

the *ethics* of slavery. Rufus Choate said, "As a mere question of rival philanthropies to the slave and to the nation, a treatise might be written which should be built upon all the great ethical writers of ancient and modern times, and which should be at once comprehensive and rigidly logical, and which should settle the question. I now know but one man who could write it; and that is Dr. Walker, of Cambridge." This admitted, what follows may serve as an essay towards that object. If it should excite thought in that direction, a useful aim will have been accomplished.

Violence, in connection with reform, is the root of our present sectional enmity. The voice of patriotic warning is directed against violence in speech and acts, not in the halls of legislation only, but everywhere. "The land is destroyed," said the prophet, "for the violence of them that dwell therein." Is violence confined to one section of the country? It has been, and is, in all the land. The press teemed with it; the lecture-room resounded with it; the pulpit echoed the tone of the newspaper and the harangue. The people have unconsciously breathed an atmosphere of violence. So for twenty years it has been, and so it still is. The influential unconsciously aggravate the evil by transmitting it from high to humble, and from old to young. The

wind, thus sweeping into the whirlwind, has gathered force to send over hill and valley a storm of "railing accusation," that, like the Persian arrows at Thermopylæ, darkens the sun. There has been violence for freedom, as well as violence against slavery.

This is not to be construed as defensive of slavery. No candid mind would confound disapproval of the mode of opposing that system with approval of the system itself. Wherever slavery does not exist, human sentiment must be against it. Apart from the national complicity, this would be true here without any qualification. Every lover of freedom, speaking or writing on slavery, must, if true to himself, as the poet with his ideal, always fail to bring his language up to his convictions; for these, if truly represented, would breathe forth "words that burn." No Christian or patriot, unless born and educated in a slave country, would be consistent, if he could argue calmly on the subject without having first avowed his sympathy with such sentiments as the following from the poet of Hope, as applicable wherever oppression bears rule: —

"A little while, along thy saddening plains
The starless night of Desolation reigns;
Truth shall restore the light by Nature given,
And, like Prometheus, bring the fire of heaven;
Prone to the dust, Oppression shall be hurled, —
Her name, her nature, withered from the world."

But the question is, Is violence the remedy? What, then, is better? Poetic inspiration replies, "Truth;" divine inspiration adds, "Spoken in love." Not only is human sentiment against slavery: sound principle is against it. Take, on the one side, Channing's exposition of slavery as a wrong: take, on the other, the code of some Slave State ordaining it as right. No unbiased mind can hesitate on which side is the advantage of sound principle. But will violent means bring about a substitution of the sound for the unsound?

Again: historical facts are against slavery. It exists in this country, not in a mitigated, but a severe form: for the scriptural or patriarchal servitude is mildness itself, compared with the American; and this notwithstanding the progress of Christian civilization has been compelling nation after nation to abandon it. This is the case, stated with all its aggravations. But will a violent policy tend either to remove slavery, to contract its limits, or to soften its barbarity? Now, this *excess of moral condemnation*, of which we have been speaking above, is not only exasperating, but unjust. There is an element of injustice in all exaggeration; and, to apply this here, what is slavery? Slavery, though a great moral and political evil, is not a crime in itself, like those specified in the Decalogue, — "mur-

der," "adultery," &c., so that every one that owns a slave *must* be guilty of a *conscious* sin against God.

Such exaggeration is only a name and a cloak for "all uncharitableness," which is itself a moral evil, demoralizing to the community indulging in it, as well as injurious to the cause of human rights everywhere; for, great moral wrong and political evil as slavery is, a more enlightened and Christian estimate of it where it exists can only follow a more persuasive influence where it exists not. Violent denunciation there, as in all other cases, only shuts the ear and steels the mind to words of conviction, which, in controversy, must always be words of "sobriety as well as truth." There have been times and places when slavery was unavoidable.

In the duty of correcting this excess in the moral condemnation of slavery, we have presented the first of the limitations of responsibility that we proposed to consider. No ethical treatise on slavery would be sound which did not at once give scope to the sentiment of freedom, and restriction to the censure of its opposite.

2. Not being classed with the sins of the Decalogue, not only is slavery proved not in all cases, like robbing and murder, a conscious sin: it follows, also, that there is no such hasty call to extin-

guish it as if it were. To whatever height your abhorrent feeling has reached, it finds a practical limit in the absence of any right to interfere with slavery in the Slave States. Still there is a class whose consciences are unsettled on this point, as appears from the setting-up of antislavery presses in the West with the hope of reforming Southern opinions, in the tenor of popular books and lectures, as well as in the self-justification so many make of their personal encouragement of the slave to quit the master. It is against this unsound impression that Mr. Dana's able exposition seems valuable.

After observing that there are certain relations in which we stand to slavery that were not matters of concession and compromise, and others that were, he goes on to inquire, "What are those relations that are *not* matter of compromise? One is this: The domestic institutions and relations are purely matter of State control. All the domestic institutions each State regulates absolutely for itself. Over these the National Government has no control. We were all equally interested in that; and that is the keynote of our difference between the National and State governments. Those persons who tell you Congress has no control over slavery in the States — that the right to regulate slavery is guaranteed to each

State — misapprehend the position. The fortification of slavery in the States rests upon a deeper foundation than that. It is because slavery is one of the domestic relations that Congress cannot touch it; and the same power in Congress which could abolish slavery in Carolina could establish slavery in Massachusetts.

“Now, from the beginning, all men, of all sections of the country, of all opinions and all interests, have agreed that all the domestic relations, slavery included, are matters solely of State control. No men desire that more than we do. *It frees us from all responsibility for slavery*, and guarantees us in our States the control of all our domestic institutions.” — *Richard H. Dana, jun.*, Feb. 11, 1861, at Cambridge, as fully reported in the “Atlas and Bee.”

Why, I ask, are these absolutely matters of State control? Because, I answer, in any State or any country it is fundamentally right it should be so. The same pre-eminent or domineering or interfering power that could abolish slavery in Carolina could establish it in Massachusetts. But it would be absolutely wrong to do either. Now, what is the corresponding healthy moral feeling? Plainly this, that you cannot, as an individual, interfere with slavery as it exists in the families of a Slave State;

because, being a domestic relation, it is positively wrong for you or for any one to meddle with it. One would think Mr. Dana's clear statements might set at rest here many a perplexed mind and uneasy conscience. Slavery, being a domestic institution where it exists among the inhabitants of the South, is morally sacred from your touch, just as your own Northern relations and household arrangements are from theirs.

“ Yet,” says Rev. Dr. Fuller of Baltimore, in his letter of Dec. 19, 1860 (published in the “ Christian Register ” of Jan. 4, 1861), “ the North has wasted large sums for abolition books and lectures, for addresses calculated to inflame the imaginations of women and children, and to mislead multitudes of men, most excellent and pious, but utterly ignorant as to the condition of things at the South. We now find, indeed, that money has been contributed even for the purchase of deadly weapons to be employed against the South, and to enlist the most ferocious passions in secret crusades ; compared with which, an open invasion by foreign enemies would be a blessing. . . . *But there must be some limits to human responsibility* ; and a man in New England has no more right to interfere with the institutions of Virginia than he has to interfere with those of England or France. All such interference will be

repelled by the master ; but it will prove injurious to the slave. Dr. Channing was regarded as a leading abolitionist in his day ; but, could that noble man rise up, he would stand aghast at the madness which is rife everywhere on this subject. ‘One great principle, which we should lay down as immovably true, is, that if a good work cannot be carried on by the calm, self-controlled, benevolent spirit of Christianity, then the time for it is not come.’ Such was his language when opposing slavery.”

But this is not all. There is a further limitation of responsibility in the complex nature of the slave as “person and property.” This was one of the difficulties treated by Mr. Madison in the “Federalist.” If unnoticed in the Constitution, it is not so in the slave codes. There the slave is person and property both ; “and the property amounts,” says Mr. Nathan Appleton, “to thousands of millions of dollars. This, to be sure,” he proceeds, “is nothing to a thorough-going abolitionist, who scouts the idea of making man a chattel. The political economist, however, knows that all property is the creature of legislation. Any thing is property which the law makes so. Slaves are, therefore, property in the Slave States ; and we of the North have nothing to do with the question.” Whatever the slave may be to

you theoretically, there he is both person and property ; property in the sense that no one can, without mischief, undermine its security ; property in the sense that no one in the Union can, without unfaithfulness, endanger its loss ; much more when involving, as it does, a still more fearful danger, — the risk of insurrection, the hazarding in every family and in every field of the right, not to property only, but life ! Can that be a trustworthy conscience which dictates doing evil that good may come ? The truth is, there is not a shadow of obligation to do any thing in the case. The limit of responsibility is absolute. The wrong you cannot do directly, you should not try to do indirectly. A truly enlightened conscience would not determine otherwise ; for that indirectness here is only another name for injustice mingled with treachery.

3. Responsibility here is limited, again, by the Christian spirit. There is no doubt that the work of Christian civilization or reform should proceed only so fast and so far as is consistent with Christian principle. Place the standard of reform ever so high, — let Christ be the guide, and universal benevolence the scope, — still we can safely follow only as we pursue it in the spirit of Christ. In critical political times, the clergy should encourage men to maintain their rights to the utmost, but at the same

time influence them to restrain their bad passions. There was nothing, as Dr. Fuller shows, contrary to this in Channing: there is nothing contrary to it in his works, nor in the spirit and labors of the great majority of his successors in the ministry. But there is a different temper abroad; and there is danger that it will enter in and possess all those who oppose national wrongs in the spirit of denunciation instead of love. No service of Christ, even if done in his name, can be hopeful, unless done in his spirit. Dr. Fuller's is not the only respected name opposed to violence as the means of reform. A few anniversaries since, in the Winter-street Church, Dr. Bethune of New York, and Dr. Todd of Pittsfield, Mass., leading ministers in different leading denominations, united in support of the proposition, that Christian reform should proceed in the spirit, "not of denunciation, but of love." With theirs the mind of Channing has been already shown to agree; but a remarkable confirmation of this appears in a letter of his, written before 1851, but not till now put into general circulation. We cannot do better for his memory or for the public service than to insert it in full. It will be seen to be favorable both to pacification and to union.

From the Boston Courier, Feb. 1, 1861.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15, 1851.

MESSRS. GALES & SEATON,—Having occasion, recently, to look over some files of letters written several years ago, I happened to fall on one from the late Rev. Dr. William E. Channing. It contains passages which I think, coming from such a source, and written at such a time, would be interesting to the country. I have therefore extracted them, and send them to you for publication in your columns. Yours respectfully,

DANIEL WEBSTER.

William E. Channing to Daniel Webster.

MY DEAR SIR, — I wish to call your attention to a subject of general interest.

A little while ago, Mr. Lundy . . . visited this part of the country to stir us up to the work of abolishing slavery at the South; and the intention is to organize societies for this purpose. . . . It seems to me, that, *before moving in this matter*, we ought to say to them [“our Southern brethren”] distinctly, We consider slavery as your *calamity*, not your *crime*; and *we will share with you the burden* of putting an end to it. *We will consent* that the PUBLIC LANDS shall be APPROPRIATED TO THIS OBJECT, or that the *General Government* shall be clothed with *power to apply* a portion of the revenue to it. . . . We must first let the Southern States see that we are their *friends* in this affair, — that we sympathize with them, and, from principles of patriotism and philanthropy, are *willing to share the toil and expense* of abolishing slavery, — or I *fear* our *interference* will avail *nothing*. I am the more sensitive on this subject from my increased

solicitude for the PRESERVATION of the UNION. I know *no public interest so important* as this. I ask from the General Government hardly any other boon than that it will hold us together, and PRESERVE PACIFIC RELATIONS and INTERCOURSE among the STATES. *I deprecate every thing which sows discord and exasperates sectional animosities.* . . .

My fear, in regard to our efforts against SLAVERY, is that we shall make the case WORSE by rousing SECTIONAL PRIDE and PASSION for its support; and that we shall only *break the country* into TWO GREAT PARTIES, which may *shake the foundations* of government. . . .

With great respect, your friend, WM. E. CHANNING.

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER.

4. Again: as regards the ministry, this responsibility is limited by clerical inferiority in ambitious or untimely political conflicts. The objections here are confined to the exciting seasons just before elections, and apply to the use of the pulpit then to influence the votes of a congregation: on all other times and occasions, the writer would be a warm advocate of unabused freedom both of the pulpit and the religious press. This weakness is almost proverbial; and yet ministers are urged "to take the lead" in political influence. A better friend to them would advise, "Avoid this taking the lead; for clerical comparative inexperience in these secular matters limits your responsibility, and should

content you to be a conscientious supporter rather than a rashly zealous guide.” When a clergyman comes down into the political arena (still continuing his peculiar station or office), he leaves his appropriate sphere, and one of two things follows: either he meets more than his match, and loses professional dignity in that way; or else, finding only equals or inferiors, while the devotion of a few becomes more ardent, with the many he loses as much of legitimate influence in his own sphere as he gains of illegitimate superiority in another.

5. This responsibility is limited, again, by the tendencies of party spirit, which operate to blind the mind by prejudice as to ideas, and by passions as to persons. Associated with a party, there is a recklessness of responsibility, in the more restless and unsteady, as to the tendencies of opinion and the consequences of speech. There are many fixed prejudices and floating fallacies, many morbid fancies and morbid feelings, any one of which may be encouraged by public teachers, without the habit of careful discrimination. By recklessness of speech, or — what amounts to the same — countenancing those whose pride or pleasure it is to use it, you may do a great deal of unintended mischief. Even when aiming at caution, a man may be understood to say the very opposite of what

his language was intended to convey: how much more when caution has ceased to be studied at all! A careless sceptical expression may make a confirmed sceptic: an honest religious sarcasm may sap the faith of an unguarded soul.

“Well, then, may Doubt, the mother of Dismay,
Pause at her victim’s tomb, and read the lay.”

The fear of its tendency to your own mental deterioration should save you from the thralldom of party. Party spirit is a snare to ardent minds, whether young or old; interfering with their right developing or maturing, as the case may be. Ideas are seen through a distorting medium, — as a stick put down into the water shows to the eye bent from its straightness. Party policy is the foe of mental largeness and independence; and party passion becomes the alloy to a pure moral enthusiasm. Then comes, from the mysterious multitudinous force of sympathy, the irresistible flow of fanaticism, vitiating the stream at the fountain; colored more and more, as it swells, with the sulphurous stain that is “from beneath;” mingling less and less of reason and conscience, and more and more of hate, to that hour in its crisis when both madness and darkness rule.

How *false issues substituted for the true*, though with unquestioned honesty of purpose, may contri-

bute injuriously to party excitement, may be seen in the following criticism by the present writer, printed three years ago, but applicable now as matter of political experience past and present; injuriously, because popular passions, illogically founded, cannot, from the re-actions sooner or later to result, be of patriotic service, on the whole.

The orator of the 4th inst., 1857 (Rev. W. R. Alger), says, "There are four conceivable modes of action, one of which must be followed." Three of these he has himself set aside; and the other must share the same destiny, unless really based on a sound position. What is that fundamental position? and how does it agree with the fundamental principle of our national existence? "Slavery," he says, "is not *properly* any part of our National Government, not an element of our organic life, but a sectional disease, a temporary excrecence. . . . The Free States alone fairly represent the true genius and historic posture of the country." This theoretically, as implied in the Declaration of Independence, or philosophically prophetic, as holding up a standard of progress, is pointless and harmless; and would make no more stir than has many a sounding generality incident to the occasion. But when, at the close, this is connected with proposed action, and we of "the Free States" are called "to rally at the ballot-

box, and assume that controlling power in the National Government which properly belongs to us ;” and, further, are exhorted that it is “ our duty in relation to slavery, by consolidated voting, to shut it within its jail limits, and cut off its nutriment,” — then the practical bearing of the whole is such as “ must give us pause.” We perceive that the political action based on the position assumed is such as to exact a critical examination, since it amounts to an order (speaking in military phrase) to the Free States to “ change front,” — in a manner, too, to bring their next advance in the direction of disunion ! Hence the hoarse murmurs that mingled with the festive plaudits.

Now, will the position, that “ slavery is not properly an organic part of our National Government,” bear examination ? The National Union was ratified by the States of every section ; and nothing has occurred since to give the Government founded upon it a radical change. Then it has not radically changed. And how was it *then* ? Why, precisely the *contrary* to the “ posture ” set up here ; for, the States of every section uniting and organizing under the Constitution, it is proved, as clear as daylight, that the American Constitutional Government normally consists of a union of the free and slave sections, and not of either one of them alone. We have such

a government, or none. And this fact cannot be set aside by any theorist, or combination of theorists; not even if they were a majority. As it was co-originate with the Constitution, it must be co-existent with it; and can only be reversed when that Constitution shall be annulled, and that Government dissolved, by acts as formal and deliberate as those which first gave them their present lawful supremacy. Accordingly, a party rallied on that basis must be, not a national, but a sectional party, — the same in principle, if not in extreme, with those other disunion parties already too much organized and too active for “the general welfare.”

A like example may be found, of late, in the introduction into the Chicago platform of some part of the Declaration of Independence as the basis of political excitement and national policy. Those sentences containing such phrases as that “all men are created equal” do not belong to the Constitution of the United States, as is evident by comparing the two; and were undoubtedly omitted for the very purpose of forming “a more perfect union.” This constituted a false issue, hastily adopted, doubtless, in the excitement of the time, but, as inconsistent with the popular cry of the same party, “The Constitution unchanged!” affording another instructive instance of the power of prejudice to blind the mind to right distinctions.

We should not be unwatchful of *foreign influence* against slavery in America, as tending to intensify American party spirit. We have no national antipathies; we welcome strangers; we like their sympathy: but we distrust foreign influences on exciting questions and in critical times. We doubt not that every sympathetic expression of the English Queen towards us comes warm from the heart: we suspect no insincerity in that enlightened portion of the English public represented in the sentiments of the "London Inquirer." Still there is, in the European press generally, much that seems dictated by a different spirit, and very easy to turn to a mischievous use. The foreign press, in its prejudiced tone towards slavery as it exists here, is an agent of ultra excitement, of which the operation is as subtle as the benefit is deceptive; giving just occasion to discern in it one of the limitations, rather than incitements, of our responsibility. Whether its source be the fastidious literary circle or the public denunciatory platform, the secret commercial agency or the arrogant editorial column, the admonitory word, spoken "out of season," is always an element of discord. Without offence, we may smile at or repel, as may suit the case, that narrow and visionary philanthropy which is always tugging at the political structure, reckless whether

the tearing-away of a part might not suddenly bring down the whole ; that supercilious social pretension springing from the accident of birth ; that affected moral superiority which assumes the right of dictation, where even the intrusion of counsel, unsought, would be rashness : against all this, and much that is like it, we may take reasonable caution. That the leaders of European public opinion should mould and sway American public opinion, or that they are in a position to guide or to test it under the peculiar experiment of self-government going on here, is, to say the least, questionable.

In that foreign field, however, there is scope for the patriotic statesman's discernment and vigilance. In the statement of Mr. Horatio J. Perry, United-States Secretary of Legation at Madrid (see his letter referred to in " Boston Journal " of March 4, 1861), that " slavery, and slavery propagandism, have seriously impaired our influence with foreign governments by depriving us of their sympathies," we recognize a higher order of signs and influences than are found in that mingled strain of cant, sarcasm, and insult, to which we have just referred. Those lessened sympathies, like the abolition of serfdom in Russia and the inaptitude of New Mexico for slavery, may be reckoned among the voices of Nature and the barriers of Time against the wide, final extension

of negro servitude. It may be, as the same writer thinks, that "a general foreign policy favoring the North would follow the permanent separation of the Gulf States;" while, in concurrence, the vast increase of cotton in India and Africa, now proved practicable, might work the decline of that staple in the South. That *may* constitute an arc of a great providential circle, by which slavery is to be morally circumscribed in the end, as distinct, though invisible, as the parallel line of $36^{\circ} 30'$ on the map of North America. But then this is the majestic march of divine progress; always, unlike man's providence for man, tempered by the benign, forbearing, mellowing element of time.

6. It is limited by American and patriotic considerations. Mr. N. Appleton's letter (March 22, 1860) to Mr. W. C. Rives, from which we have already quoted, demonstrates that there is no antagonism of interests between the Free States and Slave, and that the present conflict is "as unnatural as unchristian." He also shows, that, in the antagonism of races, there is an impassable gulf: "The two races cannot be amalgamated or absorbed. . . . Emigration is out of the question, as inadequate, if desirable. It is doubtful whether they would be better off in the West Indies, under the present system of coolies; or in Canada, where they are not

wanted, and where they are miserable. . . . Can any man of common sense suppose that such an amount of property can be abandoned or annihilated? Slavery has died out when slaves have ceased to have value, and not before. All attempts at the North to affect the state of slavery at the South are idle and futile. Doubtless some improvement may be made in the treatment of slaves; but this had better be left to the parties interested. All pressure from without is hateful and unjustifiable."

Thus are all American interests, not those of a class only, whether cotton-planters at the South or commercial men at the North, jeopardized by disunion. It is limited, too, by patriotic motives. The warnings and appeals of the Father of his Country refer emphatically to the dangers of sectional hostility. This was the "serpent" at the foot of the "eagle's nest." * While in New York, before the battle of Long Island, when alienation threatened between the troops of New England and Virginia, Washington "urges that the Provinces are all united to oppose a common enemy, and all distinctions sunk in the name of AMERICAN. To make that name honorable, and to preserve the liberty of the country, ought to be our only emulation; and he

* From an apt illustration in Rev. Mr. Alger's late Masonic Address.

will be the best soldier and the best patriot who contributes most to this glorious work, whatever his station, or from whatever part of the continent he may come.”* — *Irving's Life of Washington*, vol. ii. p. 300.

7. This moral responsibility, again, is limited by Providence; not, as I understand, by a “providential necessity,” as maintained in the “New-York Christian Inquirer,” † — which theory makes you with Providence when you incessantly oppose slavery; but rather by that limited permission — the sounder view — which makes you with Providence when you are patient with it. Does not this explain the *resentful* tone of the communications the doctrine drew forth from the quarter where it applied, notwithstanding the calm ability and noble Christian friendliness with which it was stated? “I cannot but believe,” says Rev. Dr. Robbins in a late discourse,‡ after citing the condition of things at the time of the Federal Union, “that Divine Providence designed to yoke freedom and slavery together for a mutual benefit. . . . Our fathers, when the great struggle was over, when the great victory was

* For illustrations of a like spirit, see Amory's *Life of James Sullivan*, vol. i. pp. 68-9 and elsewhere.

† By Rev. Dr. Bellows, Feb. 9, 1861.

‡ From the text, “There is a breach in the wall,” published in the *Boston Courier*, Jan. 10, 1861.

achieved, when the *providential* hour had come, felt that they must have a union of all the States. This duty was plain. . . . Slavery must come into the republic, or else no republic could exist, and no secure foundation for liberty be laid in this Western hemisphere. They felt it to be an element of weakness and of division; . . . but they did the best they could do. . . . Slavery existed; . . . they could not prevent it; they could not abolish it. What, then, could they do with it? *Take it into the nation.* . . . It seems as if Divine Providence intentionally committed the treatment and the cure of this most baneful social evil, entailed upon the present by the ignorance, the cupidity, the barbarism, of the past, — that he purposely intrusted the solution of this most difficult problem to the youngest, the freest, and the most vigorous of the nations, and that for a mutual benefit; that, by the broad contrast, the greatness of the wrong of oppression might be made conspicuous and palpable to mankind; that the evils of bondage might be alleviated while they should endure; and, in the end, the institution of slavery itself be abolished from the face of the whole earth. . . . Such was the hope of our fathers; such has been hitherto the fond dream of the Christian patriot; such was the work providentially assigned to our country. Shall that fair hope be blighted?"

“I do now believe,” says Dr. Fuller, “that the guardianship of a kind master is at this time a great blessing to the African. If emancipation is ever to take place, it will be gradually, and under the mild but resistless influence of the gospel. Whether slavery be an evil or not, we at the South did not bring these Africans here: we protested against their introduction. The true friend of the African is at the South, and thousands of hearts there are seeking to know what can be done for this race.”

Providential appointment we accept, rather than providential necessity. The latter savors too much of the Buckle theory, of atheistic fatalism and human impatience, instead of the slow “sufficient unto the day” process of the vast Providence whose steps are centuries and whose exceptions are ages, varying in duration with the occasion, but always marked by the most distinguishingly divine of all attributes, — the power to bring good out of evil.

8. This moral responsibility is, finally, limited by the paramount duty of pacification. This is always the foremost duty of men and States. It is even before devotion: “first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” to God. It is the first step of wisdom, without which there may be some fallibility in every succeeding one. It is the first moral condition; which being neglected, it can-

not without presumption be hoped that the works of our hands will be prospered, or our reasonable desires be secured. Reconciliation is the first obligation, the first responsibility, of the alienated and hostile: it was so in the time of Abraham, is now, and ever will be the same. "And Abraham said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me; for we be brethren: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left" (Gen. xiii. 8). Peace hung upon the offer then made and accepted. May it be so now!

Some injustice is at the bottom of every quarrel. Some sacrifices of feeling all reconciliations require. To both parties, of course, cannot equally belong the guilt of "the beginning of strife;" yet, by a like readiness to make such sacrifices, both may be equal in the atoning merit of closing it. There are times and seasons when the work of reconciliation may be the paramount duty of all. If ever, in human history, such a season occurred, it is upon us now. Sacrifices of feeling do not necessarily imply concession of principle: that may be reserved. Neither do they imply the surrender of a right; for the exercise of a right may be waived, while the right itself is maintained. Suppose the principle this, in the words of Mr. Gooch, of the Massachusetts House

of Representatives, Feb. 23,* 1861; viz., "The doctrine of the North is, that slavery is a moral and political evil, and ought not to be extended into the territories of the United States:" may not the principle be retained, while the right to apply it is suspended? While writing these words, I find in the "Boston Evening Transcript" of March 4 the following confirmatory passage: "Mr. Crittenden, changing his programme, has expressed his belief, that all that was necessary to settle the present disturbances was to agree that in the sterile territory of New Mexico the state of things should remain as it is, and that she should be admitted as a State." "This is simply the plan of Mr. Charles Francis Adams," adds the editor; "and there can be little doubt, that, if the border States want nothing more than this, our difficulties can be readily settled. The Republican can consent to such a compromise, without any real concession of principle."† The patriotic, comprehensive statesmanship of Adams has led to the proposal of a similar consistent adjustment, virtually taking the fuel from the flame. The little *practically* at stake (a proper limit of respon-

* As reported in the Boston Journal of March 4, 1861.

† The amendment of the Constitution, that has just passed both branches in Congress, must, as a step of justice, greatly tend to harmony.

sibility, as well as motive for pacification) gave Demosthenian force to the voice of Durant, when, in view of the slave increase in New Mexico of twelve in ten years, he demanded, "Will you break down the government and deluge the country with blood for this?" Our new President was said to have served his party enough by having defended the rights of the West: let us, in the spirit of pacification, accept it as so much service of his country. The calm, philosophical judgment of Seward should convince us that all other things are subordinate to the Union. Until we can look forward into the future of America from a higher standpoint, we may learn from the prophetic foresight of Curtis to leave some territorial legislation to posterity. With regard not only to free-soil extension, but much else, we may well adopt the following seasonable words: * "When I reflect upon the value of the Union, I deem it our duty to submit to something less than exact justice, and accept that amount of right which for the time we can obtain." Let every American ear heed patriot Crittenden's appeal. Let us preserve the Union, and the Union will preserve us. Let a penetration deep as that of Everett warn us in season, that, without a return of the fraternal spirit that Washington inculcated, even the soil of

* From a discourse by Rev. Mr. Lovering of Boston.

Massachusetts might soon be wet with her children's blood, shed in civil feud. Or, listening to the pulpit, can we believe there is no accountability to God as to the question, whether, when violence is in all the land, we may do what tends to increase, rather than diminish, the excesses in which it is breaking out? *

Let us hope much from the paramount duty of pacification. It is very nearly identified with the "charity" that exacteth not all "her own." War, according to Cousin, consists in the conflict of ideas; rather, we should say, in the temper in which opposite ideas are agitated. It depends upon the manner of their use, whether conflicting opinions are to be bent into "pruning-hooks" or pointed into "spears." Pacification, that paramount duty, requires the reversal or discontinuance of all such separating and war-breathing phrases as "irreconcilable feeling" or "irrepressible conflict." Here let the States join hand in hand, and let every American within their borders pledge to his country that service, and soon we shall see no image of war, but revolutionary swords crossed in amity upon the patriot's wall, or kept as relics in the Capitol, with nought upon them but the stain of time, reminding us of placid years after defeat of foreign foes; or,

* Rev. Dr. Dewey's sermon after the invasion of John Brown.

being “beaten into ploughshares,” foreshowing, that, in the earthly futurity, the only hopeful fields are those in which the “reapers” are “the better angels,”* and the harvest “the peaceable fruits of righteousness.”

* See President Lincoln's Inaugural Address, at the close.

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